

Division of Aging and Adult Services Administrative Letter No. 08-12
Adult Services Section

Date: November 10, 2008

Subject: Applying the 2009 Social Security/VA Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and the 2009 SA/ACH Rate Increase to SA/In-Home (SA/IH) Cases

Distribution: County Directors
Special Assistance Supervisors
Adult Services Supervisors

Effective Date: December 1, 2008

I. SOCIAL SECURITY and VETERAN'S CHANGES DUE TO COLA ADJUSTMENT

A. RSDI/SSI

Effective January 1, 2009, recipients of RSDI and/or SSI will receive a 5.8% cost-of-living increase in their monthly benefits.

B. SSI Federal Benefit Rate (FBR)

Effective January 1, 2009, the SSI FBR for an individual will increase to \$674 per month.

C. Veteran's Benefits (VA)

Effective January 1, 2009, most recipients of Veteran's Benefits will receive a 5.8% cost-of-living increase in their monthly checks.

II. Special Assistance ACH Basic Rate Increase

Session Law 2008-107 was ratified on July 8, 2008. The law contains a provision to increase the maximum basic Adult Care Home facility rate to \$1207 for State/County Special Assistance for Adults. This change is effective January 1, 2009.

III. Effects of the COLA and SA/ACH Rate Increase on SA/In-Home Payments

Both the COLA and the increased SA/ACH Basic rate are effective January 1, 2009, and will directly impact SA/In-Home eligibility and SA/IH maximum payments. **Manually update all SA/IH cases (ambulation capacity code "H"), based on the COLA increase and the SA/ACH rate increase, both which are effective January 1, 2009.**

A. Maximum SA/ACH Basic Rate Change Effect on SA/In-Home Payments

Effective January 1, 2009, the maximum rate for Special Assistance recipients with ambulation capacity code "B" will increase from \$1,173 to \$1,207. There is no change in the personal needs allowance, which is \$46 for all Special Assistance recipients.

When calculating the maximum SA/IH payment (ambulation capacity code "H") base the maximum payment on 75% of the new SA/ACH rate ($\$1,207 + \$46 = \$1,253$) effective January 1, 2009.

Effective Monday, **November 24, 2008**, an edit will be placed in EIS to allow a **Maintenance Amount up to \$1,157.00** for SA/IH ("H") application approvals or current case payment changes if the payment effective date is January 2009. This is based on the following formula:

The maximum Maintenance Amount is determined by calculating the payment for a recipient with the highest allowable income. The maximum allowable payment for an individual with \$867 TCMI is \$290.00 ($\$1,253 - \$867 = \$386 \times 0.75$ (75% of the maximum ACH payment for this income amount) = \$289.50 rounded to the nearest dollar = \$290.00). The maximum Maintenance Amount is $\$867.00 + \$290.00 = \$1,157.00$.

B. SA In-Home Case Manager Make the Final Decision on Increased SA/IH Payments

Note: SA In-Home Program recipients have a case manager and a service plan. It is important that SA/IH caseworkers coordinate with SA/IH case managers to ensure that they are aware of any changes in eligibility and/or new potential SA/IH payment amounts.

The SA/IH caseworker must notify the case manager of any change in client's maximum SA/IH payment in order for the case manager to determine the payment amount the recipient will require in order to remain safely at home. The case manager should alter service plans as necessary.

C. Cases Ineligible due to the COLA

SA In-Home Program cases with a Total Countable Monthly Income greater than \$867 should be terminated. To determine Medicaid income eligibility, do not round income. Use the actual countable income to compare to the income limit of \$867.

Send a timely notice to terminate the SA/IH benefit. Be sure to assess the recipient for continued Medicaid under other classifications.

IV. Procedures for Manually Updating Ongoing Cases

A. Report of Current SA In-Home Recipients as of November 21, 2008

A report has been created in NCXPTR under the name: **DHREJA SA DEMO IN-HOME AS OF**. The report is entitled: SA IN-HOME RECIPIENTS AS OF NOV21 2008. This report identifies all Special Assistance cases that contain an ambulation capacity code 'H' as of the night of November 21, 2008. It may be necessary to add this report each individual worker's profile in order to access it.

B. Updating Ongoing SA In-Home Cases

1. After November 21, 2008 do not key a change in income for any case with RSDI or SSI until the new RSDI/SSI amount is verified.
2. Verify the new RSDI/SSI benefits using SOLQ.
3. Calculate the new maximum SA/IH payment using 75% of the SA/ACH Basic payment based on the new rate ($\$1,207 + \$46.00 = \$1,253$).
4. The new SA/IH maintenance amount cannot be more than \$1,157.
5. Coordinate with the SA/IH case manager for his/her decision of what the actual SA/IH payment needs to be for each recipient.
6. Send a timely notice to notify the recipient of the change.
7. Key a DSS-8125 no later than December 22, 2008 to reflect the correct payment amount effective January 1, 2009 or terminate the case.

V. APPLICATIONS AND REAPPLICATIONS APPROVED AFTER NOVEMBER 21, 2008

A. Payments Effective Prior to January 1, 2009

1. Use the previous RSDI, SSI, and VA amounts and the \$20 General Income Exclusion.
2. Use the maximum SA/IH payment calculations for benefit months prior to January 2009, based on 75% of the 2007 SA/ACH Basic rate ($\$1,173 + \$46.00 = \$1,219$).
3. The maintenance amount for payments prior to January 2009 cannot be more than \$1,131.

4. Key the DSS-8125 and/or DMA-5022 to approve the case and issue benefits. Notify the recipient via the approval notice of the payment amounts prior to and after January 1, 2009.

B. Payments Effective January 1, 2009

1. Use the revised RSDI, SSI and VA amounts effective January 1, 2009, and the \$20 General Income Exclusion to determine eligibility and payment amounts from January 1, 2009, forward.
2. Calculate the new maximum SA/IH payment using 75% of the SA/ACH payment based on the new rate ($\$1,207 + \$46.00 = \$1,253$).
3. The new SA/IH maintenance amount cannot be more than \$1,157.
4. To determine the final SA/IH payment follow the steps in II.C. above. Key in EIS. Be sure to send a timely notice to the applicant/recipient.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact your [Adult Programs Representative](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis W. Streets". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "S".

Dennis W. Streets, Director

DWS/SPM/bp